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citation of the governed word *samhuilo*; *bolle* is omitted, though *hlannbolle* is cited from 1812; *i*, which is given as uncertain as regards the case, governs the acc., according to the reference to *hel*. There are, furthermore, several words, *hor hus*, *fe hus*, written as one word in the dictionary, that occur as separate words in the text. If, however, the rest of the work is as carefully done as this portion examined, and a hasty comparison of portions of the *Máldagi* and of 1812 would indicate that it is, Dr. Larsson is to be congratulated on having successfully performed a most difficult and troublesome task. It should be noted, in conclusion, that the mechanical execution of the work is admirable, the paper being good and plenty of it, the print large and clear.

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BEEKENES.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES :

SIRS:—The number for September 20th, 1892, of *L'Intermédiaire des Chercheurs et Curieux* (which occasionally discusses points of philological interest with its historical and literary contents) has the following:—

“Un vieux mot du XIV^e siècle.—Parmi les copies rapportées de Londres par Brequigny, à la fin du siècle dernier, se trouve, sous la date de 1398, une requête au roi et au parlement d'Angleterre, par le trésorier de Calais, au sujet des réparations nécessaires au port de cette ville. Je relève dans ce document le passage suivant :

Y sont deux grosses overaignes les plus nécessaires de tout dys estre sustenuz et supportez; c'est assavoir les *beekenes* devant le port illoques et le lieu appelle Paradys, q'est bien près les fosses de mesmes la ville. . . .

Dans notre vieux français, quel est le sens de ce mot *beekenes* qui est reproduit quatre fois dans le document en question? Il s'agit très probablement d'un môle (angl. mole, head), ou d'une jetée, estacade; mais les vieux noms de ces ouvrages n'ont aucun rapport avec *beekenes*.

E. M.

This raises an interesting question, as neither Littré nor other authorities furnish the word

nor forms akin to it, and as state documents, particularly those dealing with ordinary public works or improvements, scarcely employ “verba insolita,” but use terms either well-known or of easy interpretation by the general run of governmental servants. Yet it would seem, as I have communicated to the *Intermédiaire*, that the meaning of the word is both simple and sure, since the sound, and the sense of the context each furnish an analogy with which to start. *Beekenes* is evidently the M. E. *bekene*, found in ‘P. Plowman,’ B. xvii, 262 (quoted by Skeat), and the equivalent of the A.-S. *bedcen*, and the modern *beacon* (kindred with *beck* and *beckon*). If we accept the derivation assigned (cf. Skeat), whose radical has, besides the idea of “signal,” that of “fire” as the means of communicating the sign, the connection between the root and the specific words in French: (1) ‘falot’; (2) ‘fanal’; (3) ‘phare’ would be quite as possible and probable as the derivation of *beacon* through a reduplicated $\sqrt{qa}$ or, anteriorly, $\sqrt{BHA}$; since *beekenes* would then=‘*phare*’ (whose historic origin does not invalidate the principle). But the term must have been of English importation. For (a) English political predominance at the time naturally affected the districts subject to it in France; and (b) it is no mere coincidence that the passage quoted from ‘P. Plowman’ should be exactly contemporaneous with the date assigned. If I recall rightly, texts A, B, C (the last fixed by its reference to Richard), all fall within the compass of the same half-century which shows the French word. Putting together derivation and the two historical side-lights—more of which could, doubtless, be verified—we may say with safety that *beekenes*=‘*beacons*,’ that is, the ‘phares’ of Calais, “devant le port illoques.”

On the other hand, but with less certainty, we might assign another source for the word [tho’ noticing that it must be of Northern origin, as neither the Centre (cf. Jaubert) nor the ‘Midi’ have forms of affinity, nor do we find the slightest resemblances in Provençal speech]. The ‘Patois du Nord’ has *la becque*, ‘le ruisseau.’ This is evidently from the German *Bach*, English *Beck*, whose Dutch form *Beek* might give us the start in *beekenes*.

For (1) that an unaccented syllable should have dropped from some lost word which might have had connection with *beck*, 'stream,' in its more Teutonic forms, is not impossible, nor (2) that, granting *beek* to keep its meaning of 'rivulet,' this short form might not have been assimilated to *beacon*, which (a) constant contact with sailors along the shores of the German ocean could have transported to the Calais district, or, (b) the continuous domination of the English would have incorporated into the language, especially in official relations; the more so, as similarity of sound would lead to confusion of the idea involved, and the difference between the jetty supporting the *beacon*, and the stream itself projecting into the sea, is not so wide as to avoid possible misconception. Nor is this view without greater foundation than chance or the analogy of what has often been the result of a mistaken law of assimilation. For (cf. Godefroy, 'Dict. l'Anc. Lang. Franç.') we find *la beke*, or *la becque*, in the sense of 'égout,' 'sewer,' where (a) the connection with the point just indicated, is clear, the *beck* or 'stream' emptying itself, and then, by extension, the word becoming applied to artificial exits or conduits. Whence, (b) assimilation with the English word, by metonymy, taking the *beacon* at the end of the mole to indicate the mole itself, and then the same confusion of terms arising as above.

But, three, we find in a long passage (too much so for quoting) cited from the "Ordonnances des Rois de France, T. ii," 207 (cf. La Curne de Sainte Palaye, 'Dict. Hist. de l'Ancien Language François'), the word *bec* or *becques*, meaning in this connection 'la crête d'un fossé' 'une levée de terres' where *bec*=*beak* (Eng.) and the idea of the definition is perfectly plain, *bec* being the crest of earth, mountain or ditch, as *bec*, 'nose,' is the projection of the face. The same process would here occur; *beeken* being the projection either upward or outward, from the view of the horizontal or vertical, and assimilation occurring through confusion of sound. The last two suggestions may be fanciful to too great a degree. They are not impossible. And in the predominance of English rule, where particularly improvements would be affected by Saxon phraseology, it is more than likely that

in the clash of two related ideas, the terms of like sound would meet, victory remaining with the term of the official side. For it must be noticed, also, that each of these three interpretations makes sense in the passage at the head, translating by either 'beacons' or 'sewers' or 'ditches,' and all (the first two especially) being possible "devant le port." In fact, in "le lieu Paradys, bien près *les fosses* de mesmes la ville," may we not find a reference of definition to the *beekenes* of the previous clause, which would go towards meaning three?

In the lack of positive proof, the point has interested me. Perhaps further light may be shed upon it by calling attention to it, though, to my own mind, at least, one proof seems present in what I have indicated under one.

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FRENCH GRAMMAR.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—Dr. Sauveur has always maintained that living languages can be treated as vital things, communicated and received as living agents, instead of being handled like dried specimens that represent a life foreign to our age. The latest edition of 'La Parole Française'* shows a growth that must add to the utility of the book. Following the plan adopted in the 'Petites Causeries' and the 'Causeries avec mes Elèves,' the author has expanded the brief exercises connected with each chapter into a series of interesting and carefully graded familiar talks, based on the successive chapters for translation into French. To these are added a clever verb-drill on the leading irregular verbs, the two interesting *contes* of Perrault, "Cendrillon" and "La Petit Poncet," a table of comparative French and English sounds, and a vocabulary, the two latter additions being the work of Professor Samuel Garner, of the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

There is so skilful a balancing of the two languages here, such an adjustment of the

**La Parole Française*, Suivie de Devoirs et Traductions pour les Classes. Par L. Sauveur. New York: F. W. Christern. 1892, 12mo, pp. 195.